

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
CONGRESSMAN TOM DAVIS, CHAIRMAN



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
October 3, 2003

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Davis: USDA Failed Food Safety 101

'Very Disturbed' by IG Report on ConAgra Meat Inspections

Washington, D.C. – House Government Reform Committee Chairman Tom Davis (R-VA) sent a letter today to U.S. Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman expressing outrage over a USDA Inspector General report that the Food Safety and Inspection Service ignored reports that ConAgra beef was testing positive for *E. coli*.

A copy of the letter follows:

October 3, 2003

The Honorable Ann M. Veneman
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Madam Secretary:

I have received a copy of the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Office of Inspector General's report regarding the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) oversight of production process and recall at the ConAgra meat processing plant.

I am very disturbed, as I'm sure all Americans will be, over the findings that FSIS ignored internal tests that ConAgra beef was testing positive for *E. coli*. In addition, I am concerned that there are no written procedures that require FSIS to take control of beef that has tested positive for *E. coli*. The USDA must ensure that contaminated beef will never be allowed in the meat aisle of a grocery store. That's Food Safety 101.

Due to the revelations contained in the report, I am requesting a briefing for my Committee staff. The briefing should focus on the changes implemented within USDA for FSIS since the ConAgra recall in the summer of 2002. I trust that the changes will include measures to protect food safety for consumers and steps to ensure that a recall of this magnitude does not occur again in the future.

Sincerely,

Tom Davis
Chairman

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